

Midwest Natural Resources Group



Photo by
Scott Flaherty

***Thirteen Federal
Agencies Organize
Formally and Agree
to Focus Their
Efforts on 13 Areas
of the Midwest
- Midwest Natural
Resources Group***

Description and Mission

In an unparalleled move by 13 federal agencies with 13 distinct purposes, the Midwest Natural Resources Group was formed in February 1998, to focus on the health and vitality of natural resources in the Midwest. Regional Director William Hartwig is the Service representative on the Group, whose membership consists of senior agency executives.

The Group was created after executives from the agencies realized a need for a forum to discuss common conservation issues. While many issues are dealt with on an inter-agency basis by agency staff, the Midwest Natural Resources Group is unique in that it is comprised of regional executives who have the authority to focus their agency's respective resources onto specific areas. For Region 3, the Group represents a source of multi-agency support and coordination for each of the Region's ecosystems. Ecosystem team leaders can use the Group to help build support for their team's goals.

The Group's membership includes regional executives of:

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| ■ Bureau of Indian Affairs | ■ U.S. Army Corps of Engineers |
| ■ Bureau of Land Management | ■ U.S. Coast Guard |
| ■ Federal Highway Administration | ■ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency |
| ■ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration | ■ U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service |
| ■ National Park Service | ■ U.S. Forest Service |
| ■ Natural Resources Conservation Service | ■ U.S. Geological Survey |
| ■ Office of Surface Mining | |

The mission of the group is to provide an opportunity for federal agencies to:

- Coordinate, identify, and enhance the accomplishments of existing efforts being undertaken by federal and non-federal partners.
- Explore, and commit to, new opportunities for cooperation and collaboration.
- Achieve better reporting procedures to Congress and the public regarding federal progress and results within the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA).
- Better utilize limited resources to reap maximum benefits for the natural resources and people of the Midwest.

Summary of Fiscal Year 1998 Accomplishments

Since forming in February 1998, the Group has met three times to discuss issues that affect all or part of the member agencies. Topics such as GPRA (Government Performance and Results Act) resource issues and projects or initiatives of each member agency are discussed with the goal of combining efforts where possible, and eliminating unnecessary duplication. Additionally, more than 100 staff members from the Group's member agencies have met to discuss similar topics on staff levels.

In order to facilitate its specific, on-the-ground, objectives, the Group decided to concentrate its efforts on 13 Midwest "focus areas," each of which fall within either the Great Lakes or Big Rivers basin. Focus areas within the Big Rivers basin are the Illinois River, Minnesota River, Missouri River, Ohio River, Ozark Plateau, St. Croix River and Upper Mississippi River. Focus areas within the Great Lakes basin are the Detroit River/St. Clair River, Fox River/Green Bay, Great Lakes (general), Saginaw River and Bay, Southern Lake Erie and Southern Lake Michigan Goblet.

Goals for Fiscal Year 1999

The Midwest Natural Resources Group will advocate excellence in federal activities to support economic and natural resource vitality in the Midwest. The Group's key goals are:

- To report cooperative accomplishments in order to bring an understanding and awareness to the high economic, environmental and cultural value and needs of the Midwest.
- To focus on the fluid change and sustainability of natural resources, particularly in relation to continued economic development and urban growth.
- To garner federal focus and fiscal support toward the enhancement of these resources.

The Group aims to achieve its goals through ensuring that processes are developed, resources are identified and coordinated between agencies and partners, opportunities are sought for collaboration and communication, and timely assistance is provided, where needed, for the benefit of the American public in the metropolitan areas, communities, towns and farms of the Midwest.

***Better utilize limited resources
to reap maximum benefits for
the natural resources and
people of the Midwest.***

***- Mission of the
Midwest Natural
Resources Group***